



Healing Our Waters®-Great Lakes Coalition

April 25, 2016

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition's 130 member organizations, we ask you to support H.R. 223, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2015. The legislation is vital in the ongoing effort to restore the Great Lakes, which supply drinking water to more than 30 million people.

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act helps achieve our region's restoration goals by formally authorizing the popular Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). The GLRI is a successful, bipartisan response to protecting and restoring one-fifth of the world's surface fresh water. It is an innovative, action-oriented approach targeting the region's biggest environmental problems like invasive species, legacy contaminants, habitat loss, and polluted runoff from farms and cities.

Because of this coordinated effort of federal agencies in partnership with state, local, and tribal agencies and nongovernmental stakeholders, we are seeing tremendous results. Deer Lake, Mich. and White Lake, Mich. Areas of Concern were delisted in 2014 and Presque Isle, Pa., AOC in 2013. The management actions necessary for delisting Waukegan Harbor, Ill., Sheboygan Harbor, Wis., and the Ashtabula River, Ohio, have also been completed. Between 2010 and 2014, 52 beneficial use impairments (BUIs) at 13 AOCs were removed, more than tripling the total number of BUIs removed in the preceding 22 years. The FWS, NPS, NRCS, and NOAA (among others) have restored, protected, or enhanced over 115,000 acres of wetlands and other habitat. More than 250 dams and barriers were removed, allowing fish to access more than 3,400 miles of river.

Even with these impressive results, there is still much work to be done. Aging sewers, invasive species, and toxic pollutants are just a few of the pervasive threats that impact the region, endangering human and wildlife health, lowering property values, and hurting the region's economy. Without long-term support, restoration efforts will slow allowing problems to get worse and more expensive to solve.

Please support H.R. 223 to ensure another five years of successful restoration of the Great Lakes. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to have your staff contact Chad Lord, our coalition's policy director, at (202) 454-3385 or clord@npca.org.

Sincerely,

Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition Governance Board

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